

MEDICAL REPORT 1920

to the MEMBERS of the

LYNTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Dr. Falkner,

LYNTON.

N Devon.

Lynton.

March 22nd.1921.

To the Chairman and Members
of the LYNTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

In presenting my Annual Report for 1920, I propose to follow the lines as laid down by the Ministry of Health who have taken over from the Local Government Board. I am afraid my Report will be somewhat longer than usual, as the detail now required has grown considerably since the last Report was presented to you.

THE POPULATION for the district as shown by the Registrar General return is 1554, this is considerably lower than last return (1726) and I presume is only an estimate as no census has been taken since the return home of those serving in the war.

The birth-rate 21.8 per 1,000, the highest since 1910.

The Infant Mortality under 1 year was 3.

The death rate during the year was 9 per 1,000.

THE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS during the year resulted in a very high rain fall 50.88 in., the wet weather was fairly well distributed over the whole year, and although the average is considerably higher than usual, it is by no means a record as in 1914 56.57 in. was recorded and in 1912 the record was 59.07.

THE POOR LAW RELIEF paid during 1920 amounted to £259-5-5d as against £279.17.6 last year. Considering the state of the country the decrease in relief is most favourable and shows the prosperity of your Community.

WATER SYSTEM The water supply is sufficient and of a good quality, no examinations have taken place during the year and no complaints received; the Supply, as you are well aware, comes from the river, and whilst on this subject I should like to endorse my predecessor's arguments for storage or settling tanks. This subject has been alluded to by him for over 12 years in his Reports and I will therefore say no more on this head except to bring to your notice that I am of his opinion in this matter.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE During the year 2 new drains and 4 repairs were undertaken. One of these repairs was to the main Lynton and Lynmouth sewer, which got smashed owing to the rush of water in a severe rain fall, the pipes not being large enough to carry the extra flow of water on. As the pipes are the same width this may occur again under similar circumstances; the outfall of all the sewerage is into the sea by one large pipe carried a short distance out. In my opinion (as stated in my monthly Report for July last) this pipe is not carried far enough out to sea. During low tide the pipe is completely uncovered and empties itself into the river and the refuse is carried by the incoming tide back to the harbour etc. The fishermen state that frequently their boats have faecal matter attached to them; also during certain tides and if the wind is W. by N.E. this may be

conveyed to the bathing pool. In my opinion this is a matter requiring your attention.

CLOSET ACCOMODATION This is the water system excepting the outlying districts where of course the privy system is used. There were no complaints during the year.

SCAVENGING The house refuse is removed 3 times a week from each house, the rate of 1½ tons per diem being removed; this was quite satisfactory during the year and no complaints were received.

SANITARY INSPECTION of DISTRICT. The premises and occupations controlled by bye-laws are 7 in number, one less than last year, and have reference to :-

1 dressmaker	3 bakehouses
1 laundry	1 slaughter house
	1 wheelwright.

These have all been under supervision during the year and were found to be conducted according to requirements.

There are no common lodging houses, cellar dwellings, underground sleeping rooms or offensive trades within your district. 9 nuisances in which notices were served resulted in their abatement.

SCHOOLS The three schools of Lynton, Lynmouth and Barbrook have continued their work. Lynton school was closed for a considerable number of weeks in the summer owing to the outbreak of Diptheria amongst the scholars and Lynmouth for 2 weeks for the

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same reason. Barbrook having no outbreak continued successfully during the year.

During the closing of Lynton School occasion was taken to get this school and its drains into a more sanitary condition. The drains were all cleansed out and relaid where necessary and the playground raised somewhat and levelled and tar sprayed, so that in very wet weather the pools of water will not stand there as formerly.

MILK SUPPLY During 1920 the milk supply was on occasions scarcely sufficient. This could not be put down to a deficient rain-fall, but to the practice of farmers thinking more of their calves perhaps than their human customers, also to the great demand for cream by visitors etc. 8 milk sellers are registered in your district.

The dairies and cow sheds have been under inspection during the year and are for the most part well kept, but the lime-washing of the latter twice yearly is, I am afraid, sadly neglected. Whilst on this subject I should like to draw the attention of all to the importance of keeping muslin over milk so as to prevent fly contamination of cream and milk. This is a practice that very few observe, also the windows of some of the milk dealers require more attention so as to keep the perforated zinc or netting in repair, as most of their dairies are close to a manure heap, flies coming from such and settling on the cream must contaminate it.

Inspection of MEAT has revealed nothing tuberculous or otherwise unfit for human consumption. Under the food and drugs act no action has been taken.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES GENERALLY.

During the months of July August and September there existed a mild outbreak of Diphtheria, 12 cases occurring in all, a record for one year in this district, a peculiarity of the outbreak was that all the cases were in boys and not more than one in each family and no grown-ups. Besides this disease, the following infectious diseases occurred:-

Pulmonary phthisis	3 cases
Influenza	14
Chicken pox	11
Measles	6
Erysipilas	1
Whooping cough	3
Rumps	1

52 cases in all.

A good number for a small community like this. The diagnosis of the diphtheria cases were confirmed by bacteriological examination and before any case was certified as free of infection, throat swabs of all cases were taken and examined bacteriologically and until a negative result was obtained, isolation was strictly observed. Owing to this strict isolation I have no doubt we are indebted to the outbreak of Diphtheria so quickly subsiding, as it was diffused more or less all over Lynton in odd cases, and once this disease gets firm hold it is most difficult to eradicate.

The facilities in the district for the cleansing and disinfection of all clothing and bedding is singularly deficient, owing to there being no thresh or such apparatus anywhere near. We have had to rely upon the somewhat obsolete method of spraying bedding etc. Whilst this is all right for walls of rooms and floors - for bedding and clothing it is a very unsatisfactory method and by no means certain of killing all the germs. I would strongly bring to your notice my recommendation of getting a thresh or joining some other town in one so that one had the occasional use of it.

VACCINATIONS There were 30 primary cases of vaccinations and no re-vaccinations during the year, and a certain number preferred to get an exemption rather than have their children vaccinated.

TUBERCULOSIS. Only 3 cases of pulmonary Phthisis occurred during the year. All these cases underwent a course of treatment in a sanatorium, with beneficial results.

Venerereal disease is only very occasionally seen and may be said to be practically non-existent.

As a means of Preventing Mortality in Child-birth the Nurse of the Lynton Nursing Association acts as mid-wife in your district and the Health Visitor appointed by the County Council periodically visits the infants and their houses.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION available for infectious diseases. Your Isolation Hospital situated some considerable distance from Lynton and in an isolated and difficult place to get at, say, so far

as utility goes be washed out, as pointed out in another place in my Report.

There were 52 infectious diseases in Lynton and district during the year, and notwithstanding that that deadly and most infectious disease Diphtheria broke out in the midst of the busiest months in the year - July and August - this Hospital was not allowed to be opened except the person requiring it paid all expenses themselves and as practically none of those attacked could afford this expense, it was never utilised, notwithstanding my strong recommendation to do so. Even if it had been opened the accommodation is so bad, there being only two rooms for patients and none for the nurse, the water supply of a questionable quality, sanitary arrangements of the most primitive nature, no means of communication with anyone - I am doubtful if it would have been of any use and may in future, unless something is done to greatly improve it, be once and for all washed out as an Isolation Hospital.

Before leaving this subject I would also like to point out that there being no infectious disease Hospital in Barnstaple or, as far as I am aware, nearer than Exeter, if a bad epidemic should break out, it would place us in an extremely difficult position and looking to the staple industry of the place - visitors - perhaps be the means of having to close the place to them and doing incalculable harm to everyone who earns their livelihood by taking in visitors. I would not be doing my duty as your M.O.H. unless I not only bring this matter before the Council with a view of some action being taken in the matter, but strongly

recommend action being taken before perhaps an epidemic should break out and it will then be too late to immediately remedy the defects necessary.

HOUSING The general housing accommodation in the district is the same as last year and the same as a number of years previously. My predecessor inspected and condemned a number of houses a few years before my taking over. Since then no new ones have been added. If one takes the population 1554 which is considerably less than shown for many years, the housing question should be a simple matter, but as a matter of fact, this return is inconsistent with facts. The want of new houses is as great as ever. There are a number of people waiting for houses, several houses where overcrowding is very bad. I understand that you are proceeding with the building of cottages shortly, which will greatly relieve matters.

The cottages condemned as unfit for habitation still remain and no action to rebuild or make them habitable apparently having been taken. If this were done it would slightly relieve the few pressing cases, until the new houses come along.

APPENDICES

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

Statistics.

I. GENERAL

(1)	Estimated population	1554
(2)	General death rate	14
(3)	Death rate from tuberculosis	2
(4)	Infantile Mortality	3
(5)	Number of dwelling houses of all classes	
(6)	Number of working class dwelling houses, abt.	458
(7)	Number of new working-class houses erected.	NIL.

II. UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES

(I) INSPECTION

- (1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under public Health or Housing Acts) NIL
- (2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910. NIL.
- (3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. NIL.
- (4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceeding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. NIL.

(II) REMEDY of DEFECTS without SERVICE of FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers.

NIL.

(III) ACTION under STATUTORY POWERS.

- A. Proceedings under section 23 of the Housing, Town Planning &c. Act. 1919.

- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs. NIL.
- (2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit -
 - (a) by owners ... 1.
 - (b) by Local Authority in default of owners.
- (3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close. NIL.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied. NIL.
- (2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied -
 - (a) by owners
 - (b) by Local Authority in default of owners. NIL.

C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning &c. Act 1909.

- (1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders. NIL.
- (2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made. NIL.
- (3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit. NIL.
- (4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made. NIL.
- (5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders. NIL.

LII. UNHEALTHY AREAS.

AREAS represented to the Local Authority with a view to Improvement Schemes under (a) Part I or (b) Part II of the Act of 1890 :-

- (1) Name of area
- (2) Acreage
- (3) Number of working class houses in area
- (4) Number of working class persons to be displaced. NIL.

IV. Number of houses not complying with the building bye-laws erected with consent of Local Authority under Section 25 of the Housing, Town Planning &c. Act 1919. NIL.

V. Staff engaged on housing work with, briefly, the duties of each officer. NIL.

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H. G. Fawcett
M. J. O'H
Signature

Ch 1/2

